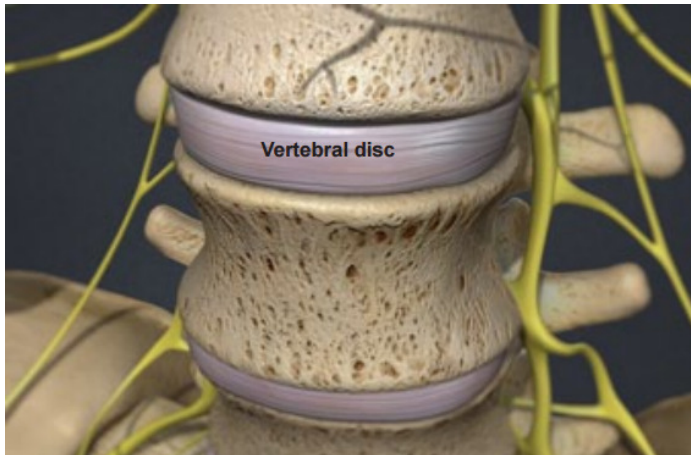


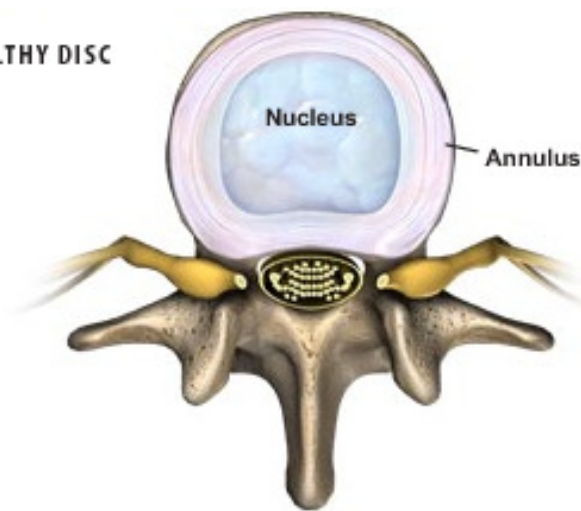
LUMBAR AND CERVICAL DISC HERNIATION



Overview

The spine is made up of individual bones called vertebrae, which are separated by rubbery cushions called discs. They are stacked atop one another from the pelvis to the base of the skull. The discs act as shock absorbers to minimize the impact of movement. They support upper-body weight and muscle activity allowing for motion such as bending and flexing. A disc is like a jelly donut, with a soft center called the nucleus pulposus, encased within a tough exterior called the annulus fibrosus. The annulus is like an onion, made up of several layers, which contain the nucleus and distribute pressure evenly across the disc.

HEALTHY DISC



Disc Herniation

A disc can be injured with trauma or worn out over time and the annulus of the disc weakens this is Disc Degeneration and is the first stage of Disc Herniation. The second stage, Prolapse, is when the disc presses on the nerve root causing pain, this is often call a disc bulge or protrusion. As the disc continues to deteriorate, the nucleus breaks through the annulus demarcating stage three, Extrusion. In the final stage, Sequestration, the nucleus lies in the spinal canal putting even more pressure on the nerves.

Causes

Disc herniation is most often due to the chemical changes in the body associated with aging. Trauma to the spine such as a motor vehicle accident or sports injury can also cause a disc to herniate.

Symptoms

When a disc herniates, nearby nerves may become irritated causing numbness, tingling and pain in the low back, buttocks and/or legs. This can also cause bladder dysfunction, weakness and even partial paralysis.

